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AUTHOR Suskind, Diane; And Others
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ABSTRACT

A research project sought to determine the concerns of parents and preservice teachers regarding new approaches to child rearing. Six parents of infant children and eight undergraduate early childhood education majors participated in the study. Both groups received instruction in the Resources for Infant Educarers (RIE) philosophy, which espouses a humanistic-therapeutic way of working with infants. Both before and after the intervention, parents and students were given a modified Concerns-Based Adoption Model questionnaire to determine their concerns about innovation and the RIE philosophy. Survey results found that whereas before instruction in RIE, 47 percent of parents and 31 percent of students expressed an interest in helping other parents with the innovation, after the instructional period 27 percent of parents and 64 percent of students did so. This may be due to students' belief that, as teachers, they would be in a better position to provide these skills to parents in the future, while parents thought they needed the skills solely for themselves. Fewer parents (27 percent) than students (46 percent) expressed post-instruction concern about knowing more about resources available on the innovation. (MDM)

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ED 371 856

Parent-N-Me: An Approach in Parent/Teacher Training to Enhance Awareness and Parenting Skills for the Infant

RIE Conference
San Diego, CA
June 18, 1994

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Diane Suskind, Ed.D.
Assistant Professor
Fitchburg State College, Fitchburg, MA 01420

Daniel A. Nomishan, D.Ed.
Assistant Professor
Fitchburg State College, Fitchburg, MA 01420

Debra C. Betouney, B.S.
Graduate Assistant
Fitchburg State College, Fitchburg, MA 01420

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Parent-N-Me: An Approach in Parent/Teacher Training to Enhance Awareness and Parenting Skills for the Infant

Abstract

This research project was undertaken to determine the concerns of parents/teachers regarding new approaches used in the classroom or family setting at various times during the innovation/adoption of the Resources for Infant Educarers [RIE] infant caregiving approach. A modified Concerns-Based Adoption Model [CBAM] instrument was administered to both student teachers and parents prior to and upon completion of the training experience. Parents, infants and students in a Parent-N-Me Seminar were educated concerning the methodology of the RIE approach. Parents and students were the subjects (N) participants in the study (N=14).

The results of this project showed trends which appeared to indicate a shifting of concern toward greater awareness and attainment of parenting skills necessary in helping an infant grow. Parents and students appeared to express more concern prior to receiving training than after the training. Overall, student teachers were quite interested in learning about this innovation as well as using it in future situations as shown by 64% of the students after the training. However, when asked whether they "would like to help other parents use the innovation" in the future, 47% of the parents agreed before while only 33% indicated this willingness after the training. Students were also quite concerned (63%) about how (in a positive manner) this innovation would affect their methods of teaching and/or interacting with young infants. Analysis of post test results also indicated fewer parents (27%) than students (46%) expressing concern about knowing more about "resources available" on the innovation. The results were discussed in terms of the layout of the questionnaire format. It should be noted that questionnaire difficulty on the part of the parents may have decreased reliability for post-training.

The purpose of the research is to examine the concerns of parents and pre-service teachers regarding the implementation of a procedure (training) aimed at providing an awareness of parenting skills necessary for rearing infants. This is a method of infant parent/teacher education based on the Resources for Infant Educarers [RIE] philosophy. Founded in 1978 by Magda Gerber and Dr. Tom Forrest, the RIE approach espouses a humanistic-theraputic way of working with infants. The goal is to develop an "authentic child--one who feels secure, autonomous and competent" (Gerber, Magda (1991)).

This study considers infancy in the same manner as described by Seefeldt and Barbour (1986), "... a time of dependence on others and slowly developing a sense of self-awareness." This school of thought is similar to that of Rousseau who in his book Emile (1762) advocated that a child's education begin at birth. Parent-N-Me provided an opportunity for parents and pre-service teachers to observe the infant in his/her "natural" world and to see how the infant develops and "learns" without parents forcing an education on them. Parent-N-Me is considered innovative because it presents itself as a practice that "requires new behaviors of its implementors (Loucks-Horsley and Hergert, 1985). The tool used in the research measured concerns rather than attitudes of participants. Newlove and Hall (1976) have said that looking across a set of concerns statements can alert those evaluating a program or practice "to the prevailing concerns, to danger signs should they exist, and to the range of things on the implementors' minds" They also stress that the statements can also be used to stimulate conversation or discussion aimed at improving methods or strategies used in the innovation. The analysis of the results of this study may be used when reviewing the program (course) to find out where changes should be made. Herberman (1983) found that changes need

analysis of the comments and responses of participants on the questionnaire to probable changes that could be made in the program or practice.

Method

Subjects

The study started with fifteen adult participants, seven parents with their infants and eight students. Of these, one parent left before completing training (N=14). The students were undergraduate pre-service teachers enrolled in a Parent-N-Me class as a Topics Course in Early Childhood Education. The course initially ran Fall 1992. Collection of data commenced Fall 1993.

Apparatus

All individuals were instructed in the use of the RIE method during classroom time. Each undergraduate student was assigned to a parent/infant with whom they worked closely throughout the semester. The outcome of the course was determined in part by the comments made by participants. In order to monitor concerns of parents and students, the study used the modified Concerns-Based Adoption Model [CBAM] tool developed by Newlove and Hall (1976). This instrument does not measure attitudes but rather assesses people's concerns which serve to alert the implementors of the innovation to the "prevailing concerns, to danger signs should they exist, and to the range of things on implementors' minds." All questionnaires were analyzed by computer.

Procedure

During the first meeting of Parent-N-Me, students and parents were shown a film concerning the RIE approach. Students were then introduced to the parent /infant with

whom they would be facilitating partners throughout the two months period. The students were paired with parent/infant, the college student serving as the primary observer. For eight consecutive weeks, students had the opportunity each week to be the Educarer, Assistant, Video Technician and/or observer. The Educarer sets up the environment, chooses which RIE equipment and objects would be placed and/or available to the child. The Assistant responsibility include greeting infants and parents and feeding and diapering the infants. A student also serves as a video technician. A copy of a video similar to the excerpts provided as part of this presentation was received by each participating parent/infant.

The descriptive research method was used in this study. The CBAM was administered prior to the start of the class and at its completion. The purpose was to determine whether or not the innovation affected parenting or teaching skills and awareness. The amount of interest was determined by whether the participant scored three or higher on the Likert Scaled questionnaire; indicative of the statement being "somewhat true" to "very true of me now." Answers which scored below three were indicative of irrelevance-not being true.

Results and Analysis

Analysis of the results from posttest administration of the CBAM showed that both students (64%) and parents (27%) had indicated that they would "like to help other parents" with the innovation. The change was more marked with students (difference = 31%) than with parents where the concern moved from very true of me of 47% to very true of me of 27%. This may be due to the contention that students believed as teachers they would be in a better position to provide these skills to parents in the future; while parents thought they needed the skills solely for themselves.

The response to the question: "Would you like to know about resources available on this innovation?" showed that parents were less (27%) willing to admit they need to know more about the resources for teaching others about infant development than were pre-service students (46%). Both students and parents had very little concern about things in the area of the innovation prior to (40%, parents and 13% students) and after (42%, parent and 50% ,students. Similarly 47% of the parents had wanted to know "if this innovation is better than what we do now, only 18% showed any concern. Students score on this item went from a pretest score of 33% very true to a score of 37% very true. The small differential may be due to the belief that it was obvious that the innovation is better than what we do or vice versa.

The research also showed that parents and students became more aware of how different adults interact with infants; of the tendency of some adults not to "look at children as people," constantly intervening in the infant's play; and that when allowed freedom, infants may move without direct help. We wish to note that modern opinion on child rearing encourages parents to "provide their children with ample love, to cuddle their infants, ... to encourage verbal interaction" (Fitzgerald and Walraven, 1987). The results of this study are not conclusive. Future studies should look at attitudes of

participants. A more structured interview format could also be used to provide greater support for the concerns expressed by respondents on the CBAM instrument.

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FIGURE 1

PRE-QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS:

Specific questions were extracted from the Stages of Concerns Questionnaire for Parent-N-Me as a New Approach in Infant Parent/Teacher Training questionnaire.

1. Concern about infant's attitudes toward innovation:

Parents	26%	Irrelevant - Not True
	40%	Somewhat -- Very True
	34%	Other
Students	.06%	Irrelevant - Not True
	27%	Somewhat - Very True
	72.4%	Other

5. Would like to help other parents use this innovation:

Parents	20%	Irrelevant - Not True
	47%	Somewhat - Very True
	33%	Other
Students	0%	Irrelevant - Not True
	33%	Somewhat - Very True
	0%	Other

11. Concerned about how innovation afffects children:

Parents	26%	Irrelevant - Not True
	54%	Somewhat - Very True
	20%	Other
Students	0%	Irrelevant - Not True
	33%	Somewhat - Very True
	67%	Other

14. Would like to use innovation at a later date:

Parents	40%	Not Interested
	26%	Somewhat - Very True
	34%	Other
Students	20%	Not Interested
	13%	Somewhat - Very True
	67%	Other

15. Would like to know about resources available on this innovation:

Parents	26%	Irrelevant - Not True
	40%	Somewhat - Very
	34%	Other
Students	6%	Irrelevant - Not True
	26%	Somewhat - Very True
	68%	Other

17. Would like to know how my methods will change after this innovation:

Parents	13%	Irrelevant - Not True
	53%	Somewhat - Very True
	34%	Other
Students	0%	Irrelevant
	33%	Somewhat - Very True
	67%	Other

18. Would like to familiarize others with this new approach

Parents	20%	Irrelevant - Not True
	47%	somewhat - Very True
Students	0%	Irrelevant - Not True
	33%	Somewhat - Very True

23. Concerned about things in the area of this innovation

Parents	40%	Irrelevant - Not True
	27%	Somewhat - Very True
	33%	Other
Students	13%	Irrelevant - Not True
	20%	Somewhat - Very True
	67%	Other

24. Like to inform others about their part in this innovation

Parents	27%	Irrelevant - Not True
	40%	Somewhat - Very True
	33%	Other
Students	0%	Irrelevant - Not True
	33%	Somewhat - Very True
	67%	Other

27. Would like to coordinate with others to maximize this innovation's success:

Parents	23%	Irrelevant - Not True
	46%	Somewhat - Very True
	31%	Other
Students	0%	Irrelevant - Not True
	30%	Somewhat - Very True
	70%	Other

33. Would like to know how my role will change when using innovation:

Parents	20%	Irrelevant - Not True
	47%	Somewhat - Very True
	33%	Other
Students	0%	Irrelevant - Not True
	33%	Somewhat - Very True
	67%	Other

35. Would like to know if this innovtion is better than what we do now:

Parents	20%	Irrelevant - Not True
	47%	Somewhat - Very True
	33%	Other
Students	0%	Irrelevant - Not True
	33%	Somewhat - Very True
	67%	Other

Figure 2

POST-QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Specific questions were extracted from the Stages of Concerns Questionnaire for Parent-N-Me as a New Approach in Infant Parent/Teacher Training questionnaire.

1. Concern about infant's attitudes toward innovation:

Parents	9%	Irrelevant - Not True
	28%	Somewhat - Very True
	63%	Other
Students	0%	Irrelevant - Not True
	54%	Somewhat - Very True
	46%	Other

5. Would like to help other parents use this innovation:

Parents	9%	Irrelevant - Not True
	27%	Somewhat - Very True
	54%	Other
Students	0%	Irrelevant - Not True
	64%	Somewhat - Very True
	36%	Other

11. Concerned about how innovation affects children:

Parents	9%	Irrelevant - Not True
	27%	Somewhat - Very True
	54%	Other
Students	9%	Irrelevant - Not True
	55%	Somewhat - Very True
	36%	Other

14. Would like to use innovation at a later date:

Parents	37%	Not Interested
	0%	Somewhat - Very True
	63%	Other
Students	0%	Not Interested
	63%	Somewhat - Very True
	37%	Other

15. Would like to know about resources available on this innovation:

Parents	9%	Irrelevant - Not True
	27%	Somewhat - Very True
	64%	Other
Students	18%	Irrelevant - Not True
	46%	Somewhat - Very True
	36%	Other

17. Would like to know how my methods will change after this innovation:

Parents	6%	Irrelevant - Not True
	33%	Somewhat - Very True
	61%	Other
Students	9%	Irrelevant - Not True
	25%	Somewhat - Very True
	64%	Other

18. Would like to familiarize others with this new approach:

Parents	8%	Irrelevant - Not True
	33%	Somewhat - Very True
	59%	Other
Students	0%	Irrelevant - Not True
	59%	Somewhat - Very True
	41%	Other

23. Concerned about things in the area of this innovation:

Parents	42%	Irrelevant - Not True
	0%	Somewhat - Very True
	58%	Other
Students	50%	Irrelevant - Not True
	8%	Somewhat - Very True
	42%	Other

24. Like to inform others about their part in this innovation:

Parents	25%	Irrelevant - Not True
	17%	Somewhat - Very True
	58%	Other
Students	0%	Irrelevant - Not True
	58%	Somewhat - Very True
	42%	Other

27. Would like to coordinate with others to maximize this innovation's success:

Parents	33%	Irrelevant - Not True
	0%	Somewhat - Very True
	67%	Other
Students	9%	Irrelevant - Not True
	58%	Somewhat - Very True
	33%	Other

33. Would like to know how my role will change when using innovation:

Parents	9%	Irrelevant - Not True
	27%	Somewhat - Very True
	64%	Other
Students	9%	Irrelevant - Not True
	55%	Somewhat - Very True
	36%	Other

35. Would like to know if this innovation is better than what we do now:

Parents	18%	Irrelevant - Not True
	18%	Somewhat - Very True
	64%	Other
Students	27%	Irrelevant - Not True
	37%	Somewhat - Very True
	36%	Other

PARENT/STUDENT COMMENTS

PARENT-N-ME - The Students

The Infant/Toddler class has opened my eyes about the compentency of children. I never realized that observing an infant and watching them discover on their own could be so wonderful and rewarding. With the knowledge I have gained in this class, I will implement what I have learned with the new experiences I will be encountering with my own children as well as other infants and toddlers.

Stacie Mawn

The Infant/Toddler class has been a great experience for myself, a college student, the parents and the infants. I have seen a tremedous change in everyone involved. The parents seem more at ease now and allow their children to initiate in their own safe environment. The toys we use are primarily household items and this seems to work well with our class. The parents were amazed by the simplicity of these toys. They seem to have changed their attitudes about these items by observing their infants engage in the discovery and manipulation of these toys.

Kim Neault

It has been very rewarding for me to participate in the Parent-N-Me class. I have watched the students, parents and infants grow and change.

One very important job of the students of Parent-N-Me was to clean the toys and blankets each time they were used. We all know that most items go directly to the infants and toddlers mouths. We use a solution of 1 - 10 bleach and water to clean the toys. By doing this we kept germs down and our infants healthy.

I have also learned to speak to infants and toddlers with direct statements such as "You picked up the bowl." instead of using a question form "Did you pick up a bowl?"

Lynn Maiorani

Through the Parent-N-Me class I have seen the infants grow and learn. I have also learned an important lesson. If you give infants time to grow, and not force them, they will learn while they grow. Just like adults don't like to be forced into something we can't do, neither do infants.

Michelle Gregoire

PARENT-N-ME

The Parents

"Babies, if allowed, love to explore and play and stretch and grow. If they have a safe, stimulating place in which to do this, it is a joy to watch them blossom on their own into secure, confident, happy beings. They need to touch base with loving arms and then go out to see what they can do."

Joan

"When I approach Alex now, I must mentally prepare. Someday, I would hope taking instructionally will become second nature to me. I now realize that Alex will and does give me feedback and it is just a matter of me tuning into his developmental progress. While I diaper or dress him, I realize that asking Alex to help me dress him would be equally as important but he will probably enjoy any verbal interaction.

Bruce

"By participating in the Parent-N-Me class, I have learned that D.J. is certainly a competent individual who is able to make his own decisions. He is able to move about freely in our living room choosing what he wants to play with. As he learns each new stage he takes the freedom to do what he can do without getting hurt."

Kim

"I am much more aware of how other adults interact with Alexander and other children. I notice adult intervention in children's play a lot. I also notice that many adults do not truly view children as people. It's almost like they see through the children."

Cate

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"Because of my attendance at these classes, I have become a more relaxed educarer. Brian now accepts that the crib is for sleeping and he does not cry as much when I lay him down. Now I tell him what I am doing with him or what I am about to do.

I've learned to let him be, to explore and play by himself. He is so content. I do not fuss over him and try to do everything for him even before he is ready for it.

He has learned to sit up by himself and crawl without my help. I leave him alone m ore and am more of an observer now.

Today I learned to talk with him and tell him what he is doing."

I always knew, intellectually, that it was good for Alexander to develop and grow at his own pace, and I fought the idea that his development should be measured against some external norm. I couldn't get away from this thought completely. I would read one of my child development books and think Alex should be rolling over by six - seven months, and then I'd view his motor development through that lens. Today, I moved from knowing, intellectually, that Alex should be allowed to develop at his own pace, to really feeling it was O.K., and beyond this, to really appreciate him as competent and just where he should be.

I realize that this will build his self-esteem. If I spend my time giving off anxious energy and always wanting him to do more, he will feel this and may view himself as lacking. If I, on the other hand, spend my time giving off accepting positive energy, he will feel he is competent and he will develop self-esteem.

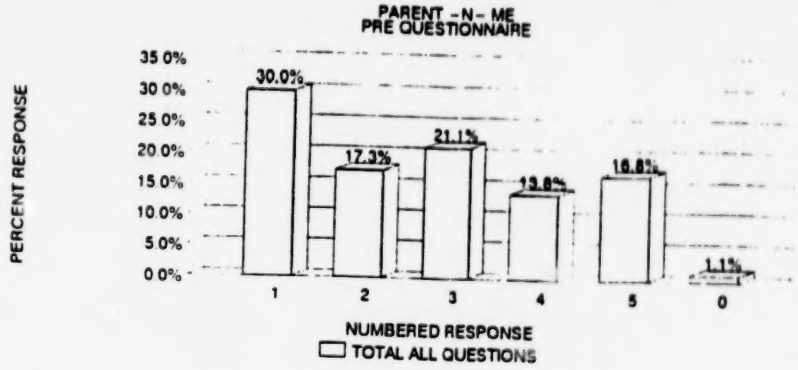
Cate Calise

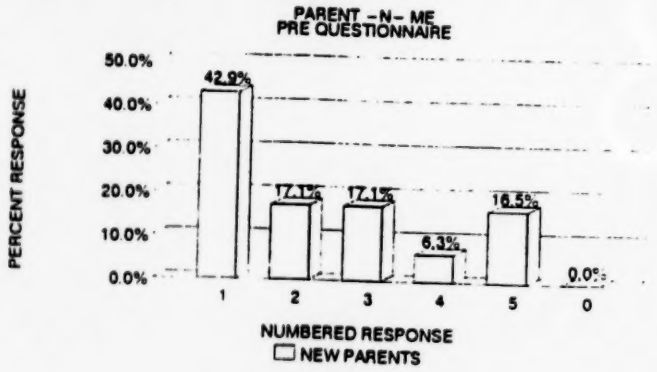
Grandma

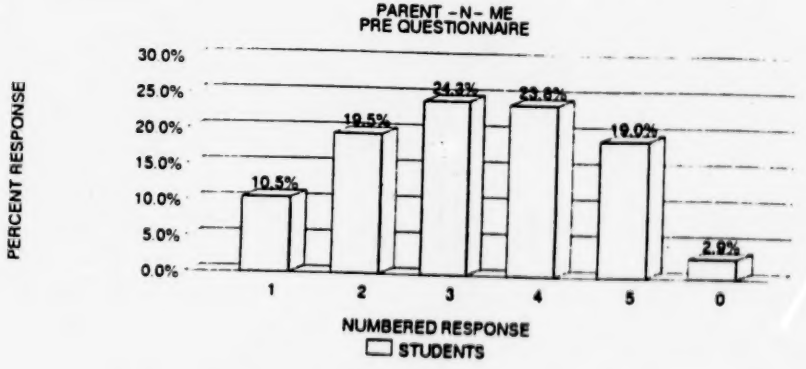
"Dependent on my 'instinctual' approach, I rocked my granddaughter for both sleep and comfort. Now, she is able to soothe herself, provlem-solve, and put herself to sleep. All I needed to do was let her. That is not to suggest a parent ignore a child, but rather to observe and delight in our childrens' competence in discovery."

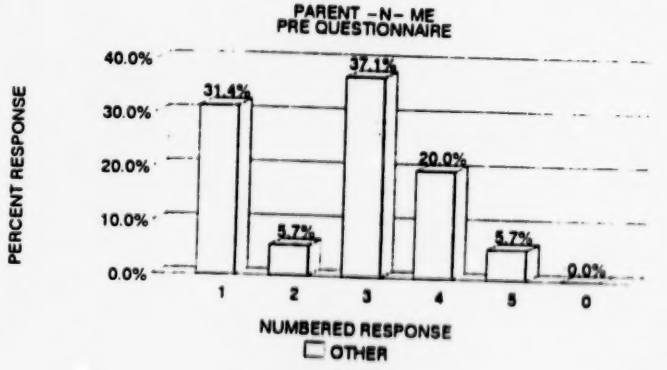
APPENDICES

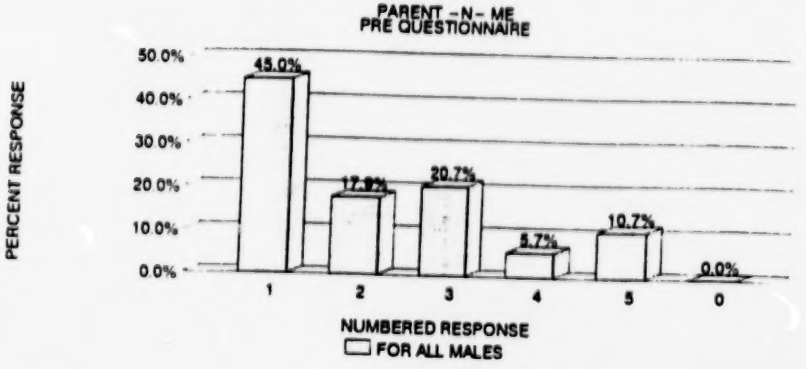
PARENT–N–ME PRE QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS

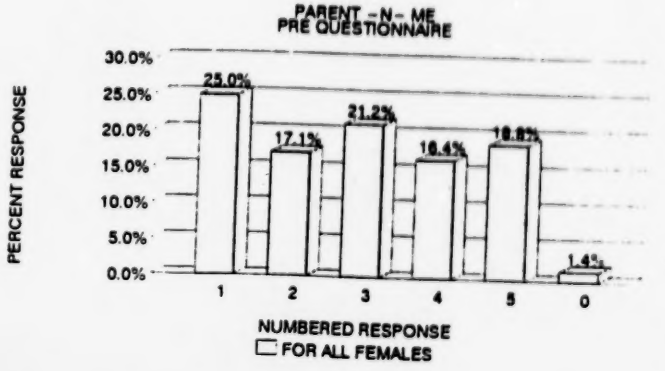












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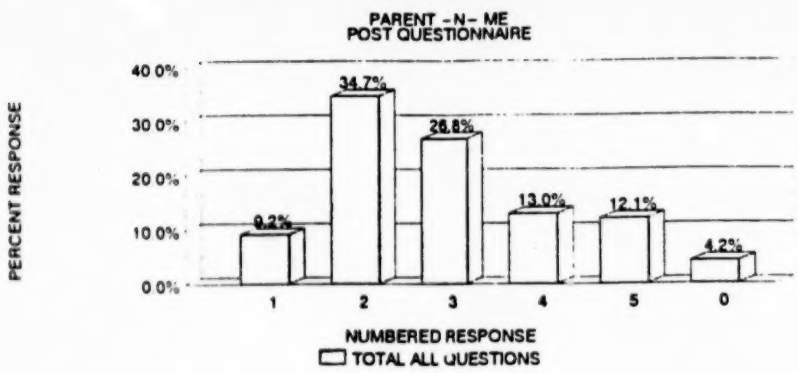
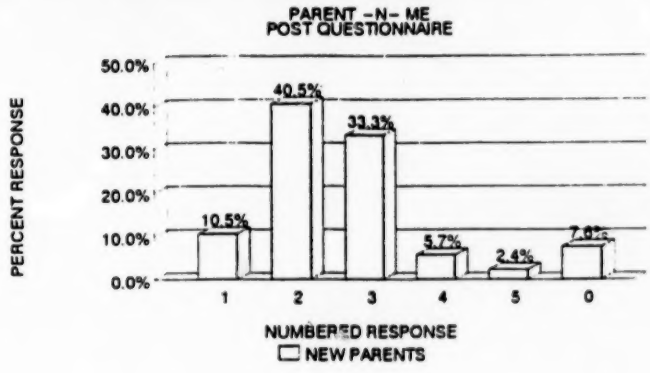
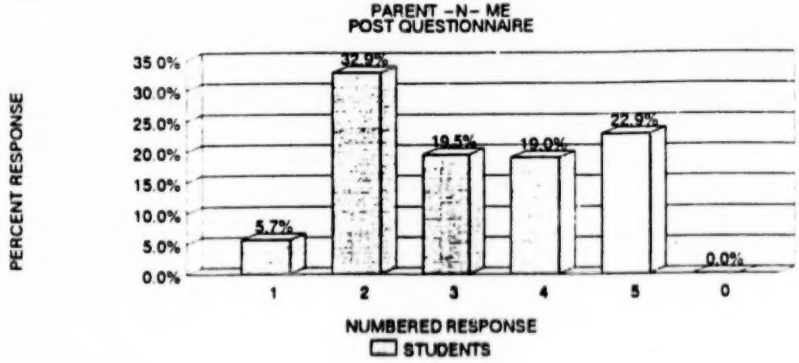
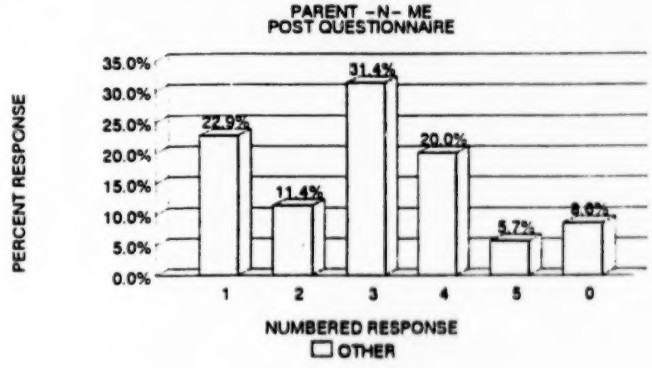
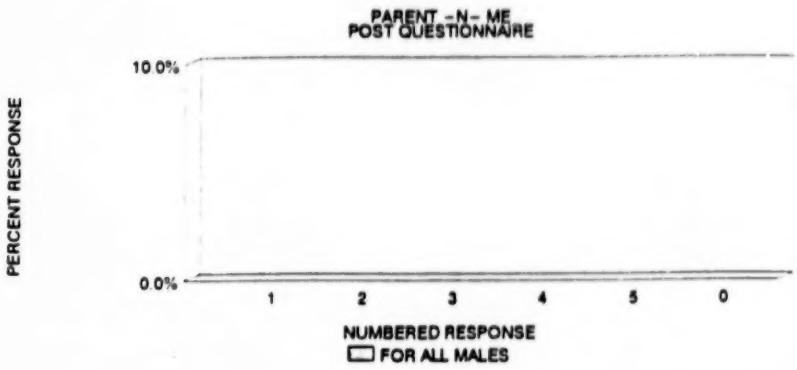
PARENT–N–ME POST QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS

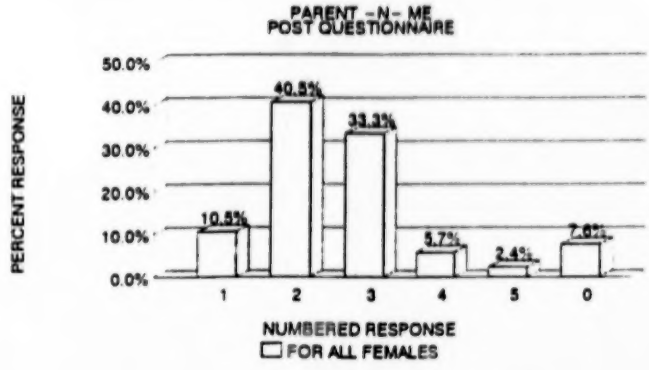












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STAGES OF CONCERN:

Concerns Questionnaire

FOR

Parent-N-Me as a New Approach in Infant
Parent/Teacher Training

The purpose of this questionnaire is to determine what teachers/parents who are using or thinking about using new approaches in the classroom or family setting are concerned about at various times during the innovation/adoption process. These items were developed from typical responses of individuals who ranged from no knowledge at all about a new program or way of teaching/parenting they are experiencing for the first time to many years experience in using them. Therefore, a good part of the items on this questionnaire may appear to be of little relevance or irrelevant to you at this time. For the completely irrelevant items please choose "1" on the scale. Other items will represent those concerns you do have, in varying degrees of intensity, and should be marked higher on the scale.

For example:

This statement is very true of me at this time.	1	2	3	4	5
This statement is somewhat true of me now.	1	2	3	4	5
This statement could be either true or false for me now, I'm not sure.	1	2	3	4	5
This statement is not at all true of me at this time.	1	2	3	4	5
This statement seems irrelevant to me	1	2	3	4	5

PLEASE MAKE YOUR ACTUAL CHOICES BY CIRCLING THE NUMBER WHICH BEST DESCRIBES YOUR CONCERN. YOU MAY ADD A COMMENT IN THE SPACE AT END OF QUESTIONNAIRE.

Please respond to the items in terms of your present concerns, or how you feel about your involvement or potential involvement with PARENT-N-ME APPROACH TO INFANT PARENT/TEACHER TRAINING. We do not hold to any one definition of this innovation, so please think of it in terms of your own perception of what it involves. Since this questionnaire is used for a variety of innovations, the phrase PARENT-N-ME APPROACH TO INFANT PARENT/TEACHER TRAINING never appears. However, phrases such as "the innovation," "this approach," and "the new system" all refer to PARENT-N-ME APPROACH TO INFANT PARENT/TEACHER TRAINING. Remember to respond to each item in terms of your present concerns about your involvement or potential involvement with PARENT-N-ME APPROACH TO INFANT PARENT/TEACHER TRAINING.

Thank you for taking time to complete this task.

Please turn to page 3 and begin making choices.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Irrelevant-	Not true of me now-	Somewhat true of me now-		very true of me now		
1.	I am concerned about infants' attitudes toward this innovation.					1 2 3 4 5
2.	I now know of some other approaches that might work better.					1 2 3 4 5
3.	I am very, unclear what this innovation is.					1 2 3 4 5
4.	I am concerned about not having enough time to organize myself each day.					1 2 3 4 5
5.	I would like to help other parents in their use of the innovation.					1 2 3 4 5
6.	I have a very limited knowledge about the innovation.					1 2 3 4 5
7.	I would like to know this innovation would affect my status as a teacher/parent.					1 2 3 4 5
8.	I am concerned about conflict between my interests and my responsibilities.					1 2 3 4 5
9.	I am concerned about changes that need to be made in this innovation.					1 2 3 4 5
10.	I would like to know how using this innovation would make me different from other people within and outside of this institution.					1 2 3 4 5
11.	I am concerned about how the innovation affects toddlers and pre-school children.					1 2 3 4 5
12.	I am not concerned about this innovation.					1 2 3 4 5
13.	I would like to know who will make the decisions in the use of the innovation.					1 2 3 4 5
14.	I would like to discuss the possibility of using the innovation at a later date.					1 2 3 4 5
15.	I would like to know what resources are available if people decide to adopt this innovation.					1 2 3 4 5
16.	I am concerned about my inability to manage all that this innovation requires.					1 2 3 4 5

		1	2	3	4	5
Irrelevant - Not true of me now -Somewhat true of me now- Very true of me now						
17.	I would like to know how my teaching/ parenting is supposed to change.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	I would like to familiarize other teachers/parents or students with the progress of this new approach.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	I am concerned about evaluating my impact on pupils.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	I would like to revise the innovation's instructional approach the instructor uses.	1	2	3	4	5
21.	I am completely occupied with other things.	1	2	3	4	5
22.	I would like to modify our use of the innovation based on the experiences of past participants.	1	2	3	4	5
23.	Although I don't know about this innovation, I am concerned about things in the area.	1	2	3	4	5
24.	I would like to inform other teachers/parents about their part in this approach.	1	2	3	4	5
25.	I am concerned about time spent preparing and obtaining resources related to this innovation.	1	2	3	4	5
26.	I would like to know what the use of the innovation will require in the immediate future.	1	2	3	4	5
27.	I would like to coordinate my effort with others to maximize the innovation's success.	1	2	3	4	5
28.	I would like to have more information on time and energy commitments required by this innovation.	1	2	3	4	5
29.	I would like to know what other faculty members are doing in this area.	1	2	3	4	5
30.	At this time, I am not interested in learning about this innovation.	1	2	3	4	5
31.	I would like to determine how to supplement, enhance or replace the innovation.	1	2	3	4	5
32.	I would like to use feedback from parents and students to change the way the program is run.	1	2	3	4	5